

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing network-based supply chain communication in a supply chain between independent stores, independent distributors, independent suppliers, a supply chain management computer of an independent supply chain manager, ~~and an office of the supply chain manager, comprising:~~
 - (a) electronically storing contract terms for supply contracts for supplying items to independent distributors and/or independent stores of the supply chain and electronically storing distributor contracts for distributing the items to the independent stores of the supply chain;
 - (b) electronically receiving ~~transmitting~~ invoice level sales data from the independent suppliers ~~supplier to~~ at the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing a network;
 - (c) electronically receiving ~~sending~~ gross purchase data from the independent distributors ~~to~~ at the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing the network;
 - (d) electronically receiving ~~communicating~~ daily sales data from the independent stores ~~to the office of~~ at the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing the network; and
 - (e) electronically comparing data from among the invoice sales data, the gross purchase data, the daily sales data, the supply contracts, the distributor contracts, or information derived therefrom to discover a discrepancy therebetween; and transmitting total menu item sales data from the office of the supply chain manager to the supply chain manager utilizing the network.
 - (f) sending an electronic alert if a discrepancy is discovered.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the network includes the Internet.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the independent stores, the independent distributors, the independent suppliers, and the independent supply chain manager, ~~and the office of the supply chain manager~~ communicate utilizing a network-based interface.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the gross purchase data includes monthly gross purchase data.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the independent supply chain manager manages the independent distributors.

6. (Currently Amended) A system for providing network-based supply chain communication in a supply chain between independent stores, independent distributors, independent suppliers, and a supply chain management computer of an independent supply chain manager, and an office of the supply chain manager, comprising:

an electronic storage; and

a set of processors that use the electronic storage and include among them the following items:

(a) logic for electronically storing contract terms for supply contracts for supplying items to independent distributors and/or independent stores of the supply chain and electronically storing distributor contracts for distributing the items to the independent stores of the supply chain;

(b) logic for electronically receiving ~~transmitting~~ invoice level sales data from the independent suppliers ~~supplier to~~ at the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing a network;

(c) logic for electronically receiving ~~sending~~ gross purchase data from the independent distributors ~~to~~ at the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing the network;

(d) logic for electronically receiving ~~communicating~~ daily sales data from the independent stores ~~to the office of~~ at the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing the network; ~~and~~

(e) logic for electronically comparing data from among the invoice sales data, the gross purchase data, the daily sales data, the supply contracts, the distributor contracts, or information derived therefrom to discover a discrepancy therebetween; and transmitting total menu item sales data from the office of the supply chain manager to the supply chain manager ~~utilizing the network~~

(f) logic for sending an electronic alert if a discrepancy is discovered.

7. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the network includes the Internet.

8. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 6, wherein the independent stores, the independent distributors, the independent suppliers, and the independent supply chain manager, and ~~the office of the supply chain manager~~ communicate utilizing a network-based interface.

9. (Original) The system of claim 6, wherein the gross purchase data includes monthly gross purchase data.

10. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 6, wherein the independent supply chain manager manages the independent distributors.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for providing network-based supply chain communication in a supply chain between independent stores, independent distributors, independent suppliers, and a supply chain management computer of an independent supply chain manager, ~~and an office of the supply chain manager~~ comprising:

a set of computer usable media having computer readable program code embodied therein to be executed by a computer, the computer readable program code, when executed, causing a machine to perform the following method steps

(a) computer code for electronically storing contract terms for supply contracts for supplying items to independent distributors and/or independent stores of the supply chain and electronically storing distributor contracts for distributing the items to the independent stores of the supply chain;

(b) computer code for electronically receiving ~~transmitting~~ invoice level sales data from the independent suppliers ~~supplier to~~ at the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing a network;

(c) computer code for electronically receiving ~~sending~~ gross purchase data from the independent distributors ~~to at~~ the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing the network;

(d) computer code for electronically receiving ~~communicating~~ daily sales data from the independent stores ~~to the office of~~ at the supply chain management computer ~~manager~~ utilizing the network; and

(e) computer code for electronically comparing data from among the invoice sales data, the gross purchase data, the daily sales data, the supply contracts, the distributor contracts, or information derived therefrom to discover a discrepancy therebetween; and transmitting total menu

~~item sales data from the office of the supply chain manager to the supply chain manager utilizing the network~~

(f) computer code for sending an electronic alert if a discrepancy is discovered.

12. (Original) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the network includes the Internet.

13. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the independent stores, the independent distributors, the independent suppliers, and the independent supply chain manager, ~~and the office of the supply chain manager~~ communicate utilizing a network-based interface.

14. (Original) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the gross purchase data includes monthly gross purchase data.

15. (Currently Amended) The computer program product of claim 11, wherein the independent supply chain manager manages the independent distributors.